



Office of the Mayor

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Memo: Healthy Retail Access Work Group Funding Recommendation

Community GroundWorks' Troy Farm – *Supporting the Infrastructure Needs of the Food Access Initiative*

Date: August 2, 2019

To: Madison Food Policy Council Members

From: George Reistad, Food Policy Director and members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group

Members of the Madison Food Policy Council,

The Healthy Retail Access Work Group convened on Wednesday, July 31st and members discussed Community GroundWorks (CGW) Troy Farm's proposal: "*Troy Farm: Supporting the Infrastructure Needs of the Food Access Initiative*".

This proposal is seeking \$37,600 in Healthy Retail Access Program (HRAP) funding to:

1. Purchase an on-farm, walk-in cooler to safely store product harvested from the field
2. Make changes to ductwork and HVAC connections in their sprout room located at the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center

Investing in a larger, on-site cooler will allow the organization to harvest and safely store more produce from their 5-acre farm site for sale at their farm stand and through CSA shares as well as donate to local food pantries. Investing in ductwork and HVAC connections in the sprout room allows the organization to control temperature and humidity and ensure that food safety standards are met so that they can continue generating revenue from their sprouts operation, which supports the Food Access Initiative.

After a presentation by Garrett Peterson and Sheena Tesch from CGW, members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group believe that providing funding to CGW Troy Farm will allow the organization to harvest, store, and distribute (through sales and donations) more locally grown produce to food pantries, through farm stand sales, and through programs like Partner Shares. The Partner Shares Program is a program of the FairShare CSA Coalition and, at Troy Farm, provides a 75% discount to qualified CSA participants (\$150 for a \$600 share that provides produce over 21 weeks) in addition to allowing those participants the ability to choose their produce versus being given a pre-determined selection. Additionally, the organization's past investment of over \$63,000 to retrofit a storage room to become a sprout room and purchase a walk-in cooler strengthens the proposal by illustrating the funding commitment to help support the Food Access Initiative.

To provide context for this proposal, Community Groundworks started a conversation with the City about an HRAP proposal in March 2019, and the organization was interested in exploring ways to support their emerging Food Access Initiative. However, because of infrastructure issues that began to emerge in July – which threatened to diminish the organizations ability to support sales and

donations of fresh food – an expedited and somewhat truncated application was submitted to the Healthy Retail Access Work Group. Members of the work group expressed some procedural concerns over such an expedited process but agreed that the overall intent and purpose of the application aligned with the programmatic goals of the Healthy Retail Access Program. To alleviate those procedural concerns in 2020, the Healthy Retail Access Program Staff Team is currently working on changes to the application process, funding allocations between retailers and organizations, creating metrics for program success, and evaluation methods to gauge that success.

With that in mind, members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group recommended funding this proposal with the following stipulations:

1. Recommend funding up to, but not exceeding, \$35,000 for this proposal
2. Clarify and emphasize the consumer choice aspects of the Partner Shares CSA shares
3. Emphasize outreach efforts and impacts of those efforts on program growth
4. Discuss how the future merger between CGW and Center for Resilient Cities will synergize, expand, and infuse efficiencies into the organization's ability to serve residents through the Food Access Initiative
5. Frame the impacts that the revenue generated from sprout sales to higher-end retailers has on the Food Access Initiative
6. Gather letters of support from neighborhood centers served, facilities staff at Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, FairShare CSA Coalition staff (Partner Shares), and Healthy Food For All (gleaning assistance)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Reistad', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

George Reistad
Food Policy Director